

Somebody Believed

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Summary: You're not alone. Together we stand. I'll be by your side, you know I'll take your hand.

Somebody Believed

This has been sitting in my drafts for a couple of months now, in my brain even longer, and I finally told myself, _"you got this. you got this. you got this."_

Would've been up sooner if it weren't for college. Adulting is hard.

* * *

><p>How does a person shift from a close companion to a potential lover? Where is the line that divides platonic feelings and romantic feelings? It has thinned considerably, the longer she's known him. And somehow, it is blurred until she can no longer determine which is which, and she constantly struggles over whether the tight feeling in her chest is caused by seeing him with another, or if it's a rare disease of her kind that should be cured immediately.<p>

"Hey, Raven. Got a minute?"

But she pretends like everything's normal, like she doesn't feel a spark jolting up her arm whenever their fingers accidentally brush during tea exchanges, like her heart doesn't thrash against her ribcage whenever he doesn't come back right away after a battle, like his smile doesn't want to make her smile back and blush and giggle like a little girl, like her throat doesn't tighten whenever she sees him with Kori even though they were just friends (again), like he doesn't make her feel like she was more than just a monster. Human. Worth loving.

"Sure."

Every day, she pretends.

It gets easier, the longer she does it.

Or so she tries to tell herself.

Raven enters Dick's room, hearing the door close behind her softly with a hiss. This is new, but not entirely uncommon. Usually Dick calls a team member to his office, or the evidence room. Rarely his bedroom.

Hm.

"Well, I'm here," she says, and he laughs. Oh Azar, that laugh. That contagious, wonderful laugh. _Sometimes I really hate you ._ "Is there something you need?"

Dick rubs the back of his neck, flashing her a sheepish grin. "Kinda. I was actually gonna ask you something."

"Oh. What is it?"

A small beat passes. Then two.

"Remember when I mentioned the ball earlier?"

It was less than an hour ago. How could she forget?

"Vaguely," she answers blankly.

"Right. Well, uh...Do you have an escort yet?"

Raven squints at him ever so slightly, but now she's also trying not to smirk. "No." It's barely been an hour, Dick. The only reason why she's even attending is because, well, she has no other option. The _Hero of the Year_ award, which is usually presented to firefighters and policemen and doctors, the occasional philanthropist or charity worker, was to be given to all five of them. It's...it's an honor.

"Oh, okay." And she could have sworn he muttered, _"Good"_ under his breath.

"Why?"

"I overheard Vic and Gar talking about who they want to, ah... _invite ,_ and -"

"You mean their dates."

"Yeah."

"Right."

"So, I was wondering," he shrugs a shoulder and steps closer and he finally gets it out - "do you want to go together?"

But, unfortunately, even the intelligent empath can sometimes miss

the most subtle of hints. "Aren't we all going?"

"Yeah, but I meant...do you want to go together as in, _you and I . Together ."_

Oh.

Oh.

Oh .

Raven hums in response, completely calm and reserved on the exterior, while on the inside there's nonstop fluttering and her heart is beating _hard_. In no way does she give away her discomfort - nor her, ah, _contained excitement._ Which shall forever be contained. Locked. Safe. Hidden.

But as much as he continues to frustrate her in his hopeless, oblivious manner, he's also her best friend. And she cannot keep _everything_ from him, as much as she conceals.

"I thought you would've asked Kori," she tells him honestly, voicing her concern for her best friend's feelings. The alieness is the main contributing factor to Raven's hesitation. For so long, she's witnessed the pining of Kori after Dick and Dick's stubbornness and longing for Kori, and it kept building until they_ finally_ kissed in Tokyo.

Back then, she was genuinely happy for them.

Back then, Dick was her best friend and she was his, and that's all there was to it.

But somehow between the defeat of Trigon and Dick and Kori's never-ending on again/off again phase, Kori was suddenly not the only one in the Tower who harbored romantic feelings for the team leader. Watching them together slowly became harder and harder to watch. Seeing them break up - even tougher. She loved them both. That much is certain. What kind of person would Raven be if she enjoyed the suffering of the people she cared about?

"It would've been...too awkward," he mumbles.

He and Kori haven't been romantically tied for almost a year now. Their breakups were usually more casual than anything else - a mutual decision. Only rarely were there ever fallouts between them. Because their relationship was based around a strong, deep friendship, they gradually went back to that, and eventually the awkwardness would leave completely.

"I see," she murmurs. She'll definitely have to talk to Kori about this, to see how she feels about it, but in the meantimeâ€¦ "What color should I wear?"

Dick grins.

* * *

><p>"...and I was just wondering how you'd feel about that."<p>

Silence.

"You were worried that I would be upset with you?"

"And him."

More silence.

"Ravenâ€¦"

"Yeah..?"

"I love you."

"I, er, love you too."

A soft laugh. "You are my best friend and my sister."

"And we tell each other everything."

"Correct. Which is why it means..._ so much_ to me that you have informed me of this. But I assure you, I am the o-kay with it."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Because I can go back and tell him no -"

"Raven."

"Hm?"

"I _insist_ that you go with him."

From her place on Kori's bed, Raven squints her eyes a bit. "Why are you so..._ okay_ with this?"

"Because I hold you both dearest to my heart," Kori explains, still sitting at the vanity as she brushes her long hair. "And it would be wrong of me to be _'the petty'_. _ I have no intentions of romantically pursuing Richard again. He is my best friend. His happiness is all that matters to me. As well as yours." She smiles at the empath through the mirror.

Raven's at a loss for words. All she can do at the moment is reply in a grunt.

"Besidesâ€¦" Kori muses, her brushing slowing to a stop.

Raven sits up a little straighter. "Hm?"

"I was actually going to ask...friend_ Garth_ , andâ€¦" The alieness blushes faintly, turning around in her seat to really look at the

empath. "I was wondering...what are your thoughts?"

"Why Garth?" Raven smirks. Admittedly, Garth is a very attractive individual (their first meeting with him was, without a doubt, an embarrassing moment on Raven's part and Garfield likes to_ bring that up_ -). She can see why Kori would want to ask him to be her escort - he's charismatic, calm, approachable, brave, and loyal, and a great ally on the battlefield - but at the same time she is unsure of where the alieness' feelings lay for the atlantean. They're not around him often so it's hard to tell.

Not that she spends her time analyzing everyone's feelings or anything. Are you kidding? Just _thinking_ about it is a headache and a half.

Kori floats over to Raven and lands lightly next to her.

"He'sâ€¦"

"It's okay, Kori. I was just teasing. You don't have to explain anything."

"But do you not wish to know the inner turmoils I have been feeling lately?"

"What inner turmoil?" Kori's emotions are the loudest of the Tower, only rivaled by Garfield. The two extroverts wear their hearts on their sleeves, so it's strange to hear Kori say this. If she was in turmoil, surely Raven would've sensed it by now?

Or maybe, she's gotten better at _hiding
?_

"Kori."

"Yes?"

"Turmoil."

"Yes."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"Talk.""

"Right.""

* * *

><p>"Hey, Rae! Wait up!"<p>

"For the last time, Gar, I'm_ not_ pulling your finger."

Feigning offense, the changeling stops walking and puts his hand over his heart. "You wound me, Raven. I am hurt that you would even_ think

- "_

"What do you want?" she interjects, growing impatient.

"Well, I was wondering, yanno, since me and Cy were talking about dates and all - he's taking Bee by the way -"

"Nice."

"Yeah. 'Bout time, right?"

"More like long overdue."

"That's what_ I_ said!"

"...Gar."

"Yeah?"

"Point. Get to it."

"Oh, right! Do you have a date yet?"

Raven hesitates, shifting her weight from one foot to the next. "Do you?"

Garfield squints at her with a growing smirk. "Heeey, I asked you first."

"I asked you second," she counters with, her own lips twitching as a smile threatens to break loose across her face.

He leans closer. _"Do_ ya?"

She exhales. "Kinda."

"Kinda?"

"Yes."

"With who?"

"..."

"..."

"..."

"..."

"...Dick."

His eyes widen in shock. _"Whooooa ,_ dude. Really?"

"Yeah."

He continues to stare at her.

"It's not that big a deal," she mumbles, folding her arms across her chest.

Gar's voice softens when he asks the next question. "Does Star know?"

"Yeah. She's okay with it," she murmurs back.

"Good."

"Thank Azar." Then something dawns on her. "Wait, who did you say you were taking?"

"It's a surprise." Garfield wiggles his eyebrows.

"It's Tara, isn't it."

"What? No!" Green cheeks burn scarlet.

"Really?"

"Really. 'Sides, I haven't heard from her in forever." He shrugs a shoulder, burying his hands in his pockets.

"How is she?"

"She's doin' good."

"Good."

"Yeah, her memory's getting better. I told her not to push herself if she can't remember some things."

"How much does she remember?"

"She remembers who we are and being with us."

"And does she...rememberâ€|?"

Eyebrows scrunch down. "Yeah. Bits and pieces."

"Maybe we should invite her to the Tower sometime. I can help her _"

"III'm not sure if that's a good idea, Rae. I mean, the reason why she started avoiding us in the first place is because she wanted to get away from this life. Not get pulled back in it."

Raven's heart constricts. She understands why Tara wouldn't want to be around them anymore, especially given their shared, troubled past, but at the same time Slade keeps coming up in her mind. The former apprentice is so much more vulnerable out on her own. How much does Tara remember now? Is her condition still the same, or is she not letting herself remember because it hurts too much?

"I worry about her too, yanno," Garfield mutters as if reading Raven's very thoughts, staring at his feet. "She was...my best friend andâ€|"

"Hey." Looking back on how their pointless bickering from the past makes her realize how much has changed between the empath and the changeling since then. He's changed. She's changed. And she never

shows how important he is to her. Raven reaches for his hand and gives the warm limb a reassuring squeeze. "She's gonna be alright. She'll come back to us."

Garfield smiles at her, returning the pressure. "Yeah. Yeah, you're right, Rae."

"Have I ever not been right?"

"Well -""

"Shut up, Gar."

* * *

><p>For some bizarre reason, maybe because Raven doesn't really see a point for it, Dick had been talked into turning one of the spare rooms into a pool room. Located on one of the most upper floors, it's secluded and private, and perfect for swimming practice - or just a place to kick back and relax.<p>

He is making laps around the pool when she finds him later on in the evening after a battle, a very short one she might add, with Dr. Light. No civilians were severely injured and the Titans walked away unscathed.

He's on the other side of the pool when she approaches, keeping himself afloat effortlessly in the deep end. When their eyes meet, he grins at her and pushes his hair back and out of his eyes. Raven slips out of her boots and sits on the edge, holding her cloak out of the way as she lets her feet submerge.

Hey, just because she thinks it was a stupid idea that doesn't mean she won't take advantage of the peacefulness the room brings.

Dick swims towards her like a fish, so agile and graceful, like he's been swimming all his life. While she's not a pro at it, Raven does know the basics and how to get out of situations that require the skillset, with an addition of a strong set of lungs.

"Hey." And he plops down next to her.

"Hey," she says back.

"Did you talk to her?"

"Yeah."

"And?"

"She's okay with it."

"Good."

"I figured she would have talked to you."

"I'm guessing it's coming."

Raven grunts.

"Relax," he coaxes. "I told you she wouldn't overreact."

"But what if she did?"

"She wouldn't have."

"You don't know that."

"I know enough. Kori's one of the most understanding people I know. How do you think she was able to put up with me for so long?"

The urge to roll her eyes is resisted. With difficulty. "Well, that's not a hard question to answer. We've all been putting up with you since the night we met."

Dick snorts, then scoots closer to her. It's merely an inch, only an inch, yet that small amount puts them close enough to where their shoulders brush. When his eyes meet hers again, they are serious. Searching.

"...What?" she demands after a long beat of staring.

"You sure you're okay with this? You're not just going with me because you felt obligated or -"

"Dick, I don't mind. You're just being my escort. There's nothing wrong about that."

"No doubt there'll be paparazzi."

"No doubt."

"And fans."

"Mhm."

"They might get the wrong impression."

"Don't they always?"

"Spread...rumors..." And now he pales in color, as if reconsidering this whole ordeal. Knowing him, his mind is racing and fast, and an overthinking Dick gives Raven a headache and - "Maybe we should cancel -"

"Stop." She grabs his hand and grips tight, forcing him to focus. "Forget about the press. There's always going to be press. The media is nothing but lies. We know what's real."

This time their gazes linger, and, feeling reassured, Dick nods and exhales slowly through his nose. Color returns to his skin, and he flips his hand up until their palms touch, weaving his fingers through the gaps between hers in an absentminded manner.

Through touch, Raven focuses on him and his creeping anxiety, and sends a wave of serenity through him to stall it in its place. It's almost invisible, the wave, hard to miss, but it rolls over Dick in soft, gentle motions, and he releases a sigh as it spills over his shoulders.

"Thanks." A soft smile.

She nods. "You're welcome."

"Ahem."

The two birds turn around, immediately letting go of each other's hands as Victor peeps his head in the room. The little glint in his eye told her that he saw way more than he heard, and she feels her face heat up.

"What's up?" Dick says.

"I made dinner. If you guysâ€¦" Victor's eyes drift from one to the other, a smirk threatening to break free, "eat that sort of thing."

"I'm starving." Raven comes to a stand, pulling her hood over her head, and leaves the room before she was as red as the roses blooming in the park.

Hold it together, hold it together .

She rounds the corner quickly, disappearing into the floor when she hears footsteps.

Just a little more .

She's in the safety of her room and leans her back against the door, heart feeling like it is ready to burst from her ribcage.

Down the hallway, she can hear the familiar sound of a light bulb exploding, and a loud curse (or squeak) from Garfield.

Ivory hands cup over pressed lips. The world never stops spinning and she has to sit down on the floor. The heat never leaves the empath's cheeks.

And the other bird never leaves her heart.

Damn him.

* * *

><p>Aaand that's a wrap for the first chap! Hope you liiiike. Feedback is very much appreciated! I don't know how long I want this story to be yet though...Guess we'll see, won't we? :3<p>

End
file.